

Documents on Diplomacy: Lessons

Unfortunate Captives: Americans & the Barbary States

- Standard: I. Culture
II. Time, Continuity, and Change
V. Individuals, Groups, and Institutions
IX. Global Connections
- Grade Level: 9–12
- Objectives: The student will:
- Analyze the sequence of events involving Americans and the Barbary states
 - Determine difficulties involved in foreign policy decisions
 - Apply knowledge to a simulated historical event
- Time: 1–2 class periods
- Materials: Documents: **1786** *Americans Taken Captive!*
1786 *The Unfortunate Captives*
1786 *In Captivity in Algiers*
1787 *American Slaves in Algiers*
1795 *In Captivity in Algiers Treaty of Peace and Amity*
- Resources: Song: *Lily of Barbary*
Diplomatic Terms & Historical Events (Section II)
Reading: *America and the Barbary Pirates*
- Exercises: Map: *The Barbary States*
A Captive's Story
Ransom for Freedom Card Decks
Prepare prior to culminating activity. Based on the number of students in the class, prepare enough decks to supply groups of four. Cards must be cut and folded before the activity.

Procedures:

Introductory Activities:

1. Provide students with copies or project an image of *Lily of Barbary*. Explain that this is an English folk song. Do not provide more information. Download the song from You Tube and play for the students as they read and listen.
2. Ask students to record their thoughts as they read/hear the lyrics.
 - a. What is happening?
 - b. Where is the action taking place?
 - c. What happens to the main character?
 - d. Do students recognize anything from history included in the song?
 - e. Discuss what the students have surmised at this point.

End the discussion with “up in the air” comments and speculation. After the lesson progresses, refer to the song again to validate speculation and comments.

3. Distribute copies of the *Map of the Barbary States*. Have students label the map with the locations provided: Morocco, Algiers, Tripoli, Tunis, Mediterranean Sea. Have students keep these maps for reference as they complete the remainder of the lesson.

Reading of Documents:

1. Provide students with the documents *American Slaves in Algiers* and *The Unfortunate Captives*, both letters from captive Richard O’Bryen.

Note to Teacher: All information gleaned from these letters and subsequent documents (including the Reading) will be used in the Culminating Activity—the main goal of the lesson. Allow time accordingly.

2. Have students read the two letters without any explanation of the material (as was done with the song, *Lily of Barbary*). They should have access to the *Key Terms & Historical Events for Section II* to identify unfamiliar vocabulary. Two options may be utilized with the reading:

Option 1:

Have students address the following points after reading (can be done individually or within groups):

- Explain the situation in which Richard O’Bryen finds himself.
- How are European countries involved?
- Describe the obviously profitable operation run by the Dey of Algiers.
- What alternatives exist for the resolution of problems presented by O’Bryen?

Option 2:

Have students use the questions in *A Captive’s Story* to guide their reading.

3. Debrief the answers provided by students. Compile information to complete a picture of what was happening in the year of the letters—1786.

4. Provide copies of the documents, *Americans Taken Captive* and *In Captivity in Algiers*. Discuss:

- a. What does John Jay, as Foreign Minister, propose to Congress?
- b. John Lamb was sent to pay ransom for the 21 men. Describe the difficulties he faced in trying to make this deal.

5. Have students read the document, *Treaty of Peace and Amity signed at Algiers*, especially Articles 2, 4, 12, 16, 17, and most especially, Article 22.

Determine the main terms of the Treaty.

- Is it a treaty to avoid war between the United States and Algiers?
- What is done with the issue of tribute (paying for safe passage of American ships)?

On an approval level of 1–5, with 5 being a “top-notch” treaty for the United States, have students rate this treaty. They should write one sentence explaining their rating of the treaty. Read the sentences and tally on the board, where each student’s rating falls. (Put the scale of 1-5 on the board with enough room between the numbers to place tally marks.)

6. Provide copies of the resource, *America and the Barbary Pirates: An International Battle Against an Unconventional Foe*, to students for background reading. Refer to previous activities and correlate students’ earlier observations with this reading.

Culminating Activity:

- 1.** Divide students into groups of four.
- 2.** One person will be the Dey of Algiers and the others are captured American slaves.
- 3.** Instructions: *Ransom for Freedom Cards*
 - a.** Have the Dey in each group prepare a Tally Sheet with three columns headed by the names of the students and with 10 check-off slots under each name. The Dey will place a check under the name of each captive when he or she correctly answers the questions.
 - b.** Provide each Dey with a deck of cards. Shuffle the cards. The Dey should spread the cards (with only the word “Ransom” showing) in his hand as one would hold a deck of cards.

OR

Spread the cards (Ransom side up) on the desk in front of him.
 - c.** Each slave will draw cards from the deck (either one at a time or 10 at one time) and—without looking at the questions—hand the card(s) to the Dey.
 - d.** The Dey will read the question on each card as it is drawn or turned over. Answers are included in parentheses.
 - e.** If a question is missed, it should be returned to the “deck” of cards.
 - f.** The slave must answer the card he/she has chosen. If the question is answered correctly, the Dey will place a check on the Tally Sheet under that slave’s name.
 - g.** The slaves hope to get 10 tally checks which means FREEDOM.
 - h.** Allow enough class time for the Dey to ask all questions in the card deck. Once the deck is completed, the Dey no longer holds court. If the slaves did not receive enough checks, they will return to their duties. Those who earned Ransom will be sent to a ship and returned to the United States.
- 4.** Debrief the game by having students summarize the story of the United States and the challenges of the Barbary States. Summaries may be oral or written. ■